How Parents Should Spend Their Time With Kids Back in School

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A lot of parents really look forward to the first day of school. Not only do they support growth and learning, but it’s also nice to have the house to themselves for a few hours each day. Summer can get pretty hectic, and school hours provide a much-needed respite.

For stay-at-home parents, those school hours provide a lot of opportunities. The question is, how do you fill up those empty hours in your Calendar? Here are a few ways parents can make the most of the time the kids are away at school this upcoming scholastic year:

Reverse the Damage of Summer

First things first, staying on top of messes during the summer can be quite tricky. However, now that your kids will be spending most of the day at school, you have plenty of time to pick up the slack left in housekeeping. Just a few days of elbow grease should be all you need to reverse the majority of the damage left by summer festivities.

Sure, it’s helpful and even developmentally beneficial to have your kids pitch in with the cleaning, especially if they’re responsible for the mess. However, school can often be a stressful time, and you don’t want to overload them too much

if they’re struggling during their first week. Besides, you work much more efficiently than they do anyways.

Prepare the Afternoons

When your kids get home from school, they are going to be tired from sitting all day in a classroom and participating in any after-school activities they’re enrolled in. They won’t always be super agreeable or cooperative, especially if a long day was equally difficult. Preparing the afternoons for them is a great parenting gesture that requires little effort but goes a long way.

For example, let’s say you know one of your sons is coming home from football practice, and your other son is stressed about an application for the Honor Society. Before they even walk through the door, they have everything they need set up. Layout a change of clothes and set up a study area. The little things like this you can do will pave the way for your children to succeed no matter what they do.

Do Some Meal Planning

If there is anything kids can do well, it’s eating and eating often. Of course, they’ll be expecting dinner to be made for them as they return home and some sack lunches to take on a day when the cafeteria is serving mystery meat. So to avoid kitchen burnout, use your time while everyone is at school to do some meal planning.

By planning out your weekly meals, you can do your grocery shopping more efficiently and even cut down on cooking time. Leftover dinner can provide lunch for all your kids the next day or even provide some meal variations for the entire week. If you’re deciding what to cook at three in the afternoon, you’re already behind.

Nothing will make meal prep as easy as an online calendar. List out the meals you want to try throughout the week and plan around your shopping trips. You can even coordinate with other families to share meals with some of your kids' friends.

Enjoy the Alone Time

Let's face it; you've earned some 'me time' and should start cashing it in. The extensive family time in the summer is incredible but admittedly exhausting. So kick up your feet for a spell and enjoy a few hours of peace and quiet after months of chaos.

Try to make your alone time a little productive or at least enjoyable. Opt for reading a book or picking up an old hobby before binge-watching the latest season of Grey's Anatomy. If it helps, use your Calendar to intentionally plan solitary activities that will ensure the entire afternoon isn't spent napping.

Improve Yourself

As an extension to that alone time, you can take a page out of your kids' schoolbooks and look for some ways to improve yourself. For example, you can brush up on your math skills to help with homework, or even continue your own education using the plethora of online classes available through universities around the country.

Other ways to improve yourself include getting more exercise or maintaining your mental health. With kids out of the house, it will be much easier to fit in a long daily workout or book a Calendar appointment with a counselor or therapist.

Not sure what challenge you want to face? Check out the app store on your phone for some simple ideas. Some apps can teach you new languages, give you creative writing prompts, or even

how to do basic coding.

Start a Side Hustle

Being a stay-at-home parent is both admirable and awe-inspiring. However, it can be noted that some of these parents sometimes don’t feel completely fulfilled when their kids spend long hours away from home. One way to fill up the time while providing for both the family and society as a whole is to start a side hustle.

Some side hustles are easy to get into, like downloading a food delivery or ridesharing app and picking up the odd job around town. Others require more creativity but can be more rewarding, like selling arts and crafts online. There’s really no limit to what you can do, from baked goods and homespun clothing to lawn care and painting.

Thanks to the magic of technology, it’s also easier than ever for stay-at-home parents to pick up a part-time job. In addition, working remotely opens up many more doors from employment with flexible schedules for even the parents with jam-packed Calendars.

Challenge yourself to do more with the time you’re being given this school year. Set goals using your Calendar and work alongside your children to become better people every single day.

Image Credit: cottonbro; pexels; thank you!

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